

PLACER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Ken Grehm, Director Peter Kraatz, Deputy Director

December 21, 2011

Dear Interested Party:

Regarding: DOLLAR CREEK SHARED-USE TRAIL PROJECT

This correspondence represents Placer County's response to your feedback regarding the proposed Dollar Creek Shared-Use Trail Project (Project). The County has received numerous public Comment Forms since our request for feedback on the proposed Project. We thank you for taking the time to participate in the public process and appreciate your comments.

Placer County conducted Information Open House meetings for the Project on October 4, 2011 and October 18, 2011 at the North Tahoe Event Center. The purpose of the meetings was to share information about the Project that is currently in the preliminary engineering and environmental analysis stages, as well as to receive public feedback. Five and 52 members of the public and agency representatives, respectively, attended the meetings.

While there was no legal requirement to conduct public meetings for this Project, Placer County sought to engage with the local community early in the planning process. Meeting notices were mailed to owners of the 298 residences located within 1,000 feet of the Project area. In an effort to get meeting information to non-owner tenants, planning consultant staff hand-delivered notices to residents of the Highlands and Cedar Flats neighborhoods. In addition, the Sierra Sun published information on the Project in their October 14, 2011 weekend edition.

At the larger October 18 meeting, Peter Kraatz with Placer County Public Works (County); Kathy Long of the North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD); Lisa O'Daly with the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy); Brian Judge with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA); Chris Stetler with Nichols Consulting Engineers, Inc.; and Melanie Greene, Garth Alling, and Rob Brueck with Hauge Brueck Associates (HBA) informally discussed the proposed Project with meeting attendees and received their written comment forms for consideration.

Placer County has received both comments and questions regarding the Project. In response to public interest, Placer County is developing and populating a Project-specific website: http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/Works/Projects.aspx. The website will be updated with new information as it is prepared. We invite you to use this website as a tool to stay informed regarding the Project.

To date, 32 commenters have submitted approximately 152 individual comments and questions pertaining to the following general topics:

- General support for, or opposition to, the Project;
- Questions about the Project description, design, and operation (e.g., handicap accessibility, trail
 dimensions and alternative designs, and questions about whether bathrooms will be provided,
 trash pickup, and the like);

- Questions regarding the proposed trail location within the Project area and suggestions for
 potential neighborhood connectors (e.g., concern about trail location through bouldering site,
 proximity to houses, location of paved trail over existing native surface trails) and the need for
 connectivity between north shore communities and Tahoe City;
- Questions about the trail alignment (e.g., origination and ending points; why isn't the trail located along SR 28);
- Questions about the larger user group (type of rider or pedestrian) who uses shared-use trails;
- Questions about Project funding sources and the type and availability of funding (e.g., where will the funding come from, how much will the Project cost and should the money be used for other public needs, long-term maintenance costs);
- Concerns regarding potential Project impacts, both construction and operations: grading; impacts to flora, fauna and habitats (e.g., presence of unique plants, habitat loss for wildlife); impacts to existing recreation (e.g., cross-country ski center, bouldering area, mountain biking, dog walking); and impacts to public safety and neighborhood compatibility (e.g., access by motorized vehicles, user conflicts, trail steepness and grade, vandalism and littering in adjacent neighborhoods); and
- Request for clarification on the location of the proposed trailhead parking area and parking impacts (e.g., concerns about existing parking along Fulton Crescent and the potential for Project to increase cars/traffic in neighborhood, access through private property).

Last summer and fall, a variety of baseline environmental information was collected for the Project. The draft environmental document is in preparation and is proposed for release for public review in spring 2012. While it will address the above questions and more, I wanted to share the following information at this time:

- 1. <u>Funding</u> State and local grant funding exists for our current Project planning effort which will produce preliminary engineering plans and complete an environmental document. Future funding for detailed design and construction does not exist at this time. As with many capital public works projects pursued by the County, funding is rarely guaranteed at this stage of the Project development. The Project is eligible for only certain types of funding, such as transportation and recreation grants; and it does not compete for funding that is reserved for other public services, such as health and human services or education.
- 2. <u>Land Ownership</u> The trail is proposed to be located on public lands owned by the NTPUD and the Conservancy. These lands are not designated "open space" or considered "Wilderness" as defined by Federal regulations. Rather, their potential future public access opportunities, including this proposed trail, were key considerations for their public acquisition.
- 3. The Vision for a Bicycle Network at Lake Tahoe Recent transportation agency planning documents identify that 162 miles of new infrastructure is needed to complete Lake Tahoe's bicycle and pedestrian network. The introductory paragraph of the Lake Tahoe Bike and Pedestrian Plan's Executive Summary states:

"Lake Tahoe communities have identified biking and walking opportunities as critical components of a well-rounded transportation system. A strong bicycle and pedestrian network draws people out of their cars, in turn boosting the economy, improving air quality, and creating attractive, healthy communities. Connected bicycle paths, sidewalks, and transit are the backbone of a people-oriented transportation system that supports neighborhoods, commercial districts, and recreation areas. This connected transportation system that centers on non-motorized travel will also help Lake Tahoe meet Tahoe Regional Planning Agency environmental thresholds and greenhouse gas reduction targets."

-Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization 2010

Throughout the planning and study of this Project, you may direct additional questions or comments to me via U.S. mail, email or phone. My mailing address is provided on the letterhead, my phone number is (530) 581-6230, and my email address is pkraatz@placer.ca.gov. I apologize that the previous Project correspondence utilized our consultant's return address. When using outside resources for planning of public works projects, we sometimes miss the things that can, understandably, be more important to others. Placer County remains the Project lead agency, and I am your primary contact.

Thank you for your interest in this Project. I look forward to the future opportunities to expand the dialogue on this Project.

Deputy Director

Placer County Department of Public Works